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Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which covers the period from January to December 2015, is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/282, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual report on the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Peacebuilding Fund celebrated a number of milestones in 2015, including the launch of its first cross-border initiative along the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border and the allocation of over 15 per cent of investments to support women's empowerment. Flexible management of the Fund in crisis-affected countries, including Burundi, Mali and Yemen and Ebola-affected countries, ensured that critical human rights and security initiatives were maintained in settings from which most donors had withdrawn their support. Despite these gains, waning finances have begun to limit the availability of funds to match demand.

As recognized by independent global reviews, sufficient and predictable resources for peacebuilding will be needed for the Peacebuilding Fund to continue to realize its universally recognized role of supporting early, high-risk peacebuilding and promoting system-wide coherence.

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I. Introduction

1. The present annual report, which covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015, is the sixth report submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/282. It will be complemented by a financial report to be issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 1 May 2016. Additional information is available from www.unpbf.org, and complete information on individual projects is available on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway (http://mptf.undp.org).

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. The year 2015 was dominated by key reviews of the role of the United Nations in making and sustaining peace, namely, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which validated the Peacebuilding Fund's role in incentivizing a system-wide, politically engaged response and in promoting coherence in crisis settings. As a central pillar within the peacebuilding architecture, the Peacebuilding Support Office welcomes the recommendations of those reviews, many of which it has already begun to implement.

3. The call by the review of the peacebuilding architecture for greater engagement between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund was advanced as early as June at the Commission's annual session, during which participants issued a strong warning about the dangers of a fragmented and underresourced funding system. Those concerns were echoed during an informal meeting on Somalia — a Fund-recipient country — hosted by the Commission in November, at which participants agreed on the critical importance of predictable and coherent funding. Building upon that momentum, starting in 2016, the Fund will approach the Commission to host informal discussions on the five-year vision of newly eligible Fund-recipient countries.

4. Calls by the reviews for strengthened partnership with international financial institutions implicitly recognize the importance of coherence, not just in relation to peacebuilding initiatives, but also to the development strategies that follow. In that spirit, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the World Bank solidified their cooperation in 2015, with the Bank hosting the semi-annual meeting of the Fund's Advisory Group in November. In addition to mapping the way forward on joint evaluations in the Central African Republic and Somalia, the meeting also highlighted progress on the thematic review of employment and peacebuilding, an initiative bringing together the Peacebuilding Support Office, the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Following the meeting, the Fund and the World Bank held their first quarterly meeting to plan joint approaches to project design, monitoring and evaluation to better align their work in the future.

5. Enhanced partnership in 2015 between the Fund and the World Bank extended to country engagement. In Somalia, both institutions committed to co-financing a ground-breaking joint project that will provide infrastructure support to newly recovered territories through national financial systems. In the Central African Republic, building upon an earlier partnership on the payment of salaries of civil

servants and security actors, the Fund and the World Bank will launch a joint assessment in early 2016 to identify strategic entry points for future collaboration, underscoring the importance of a cohesive strategy.

6. The Fund also experimented with creative arrangements to encourage donor support for common funding pools in 2015. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Fund was the first to support two projects that operationalize provincial stabilization strategies and test an innovative donor-matching scheme. Its commitment leveraged an additional $12 million from other donors and triggered the launch of the multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Fund in November. The Fund's success in promoting system-wide coherence has been mentioned in all recent independent reviews, including the evaluation of integration in mission settings, under preparation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

7. In addition to 2015 being a year during which key reviews were undertaken, it also represented a time for innovation of the Fund. Advancing another recommendation from the review of the peacebuilding architecture, initiatives launched in 2015 aimed at engaging civil society and bringing the voice of citizens into the Fund's decision-making and oversight bodies. In Madagascar and the Niger, the Peacebuilding Fund partnered with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes and the PeaceNexus Foundation, respectively, to ensure that strategic priorities were identified through inclusive, participatory approaches that reached beyond capital cities and into local communities. In Kyrgyzstan, monitoring visits by teams of local non-governmental organizations, the Government and United Nations partners provided communities participating in Fund-sponsored initiatives with a direct link to the Joint Steering Committee. In Mali, the Fund began piloting community-based monitoring that regularly affords citizens the opportunity to express their views on local needs and peacebuilding progress. A number of those engagements were facilitated by peace and development advisers, deployed in partnership with UNDP, the Department of Political Affairs and the Fund. Advisers ensure that the Fund's investments are conflict-sensitive and guided by rigorous political analysis and have proved to be critical partners to the successful design and implementation of conflict-sensitive programmes.

8. The year 2015 also marked the first time that the Fund had successfully met the Secretary-General's target on funding to support gender equality and women's empowerment, by allocating 15.7 per cent to women-centred initiatives, including projects whose principal objective is to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as targeted activities within projects that mainstream gender equality. That achievement marks a refinement in the methodology for calculating allocations, an improvement made possible by the Fund's expanded monitoring and evaluation capacity.

9. While the achievement of the target was an important milestone, allocations supporting gender equality and women's empowerment continue to be connected to the Immediate Response Facility, in which the Fund plays a stronger role, rather than being prioritized at the country level. Moreover, allocations to projects that mainstream gender decreased by 19 per cent in 2015. Overall results, therefore, remain mixed and illustrate the need for dedicated expertise and the commitment of senior management at the country level to fully mainstream gender throughout peacebuilding portfolios.

10. Continuing its encouragement of women's empowerment, the Fund will launch its third Gender Promotion Initiative in early 2016, in ongoing partnership with UN-Women and United Nations Volunteers programme. Ongoing efforts by the Peacebuilding Commission to develop a strategy to mainstream gender in its country-specific engagement will provide policy support to initiatives on the ground.

11. The Fund's new work in the area of regional programming was launched in 2015, with the approval of its first-ever cross-border project to promote confidence-building along the restive Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border. Anchored in ongoing programming for Kyrgyzstan, which has been declared eligible for the Fund, the $3-million project brings together local authorities, security actors and citizens in both States to reduce tension, mitigate immediate risks of cross-border violence and prevent future conflict. Advancing its partnership with regional actors in Madagascar, the Fund partnered with the African Union, the European Union and UNDP to support Government efforts for security sector reform. The Peacebuilding Support Office will continue to seek opportunities to advance the recommendation of the review of the peacebuilding architecture to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations, most immediately by exploring support to the African Union to deploy human rights monitors to Burundi during the current politically volatile period.

12. The Fund's increasing emphasis on violence prevention, moreover, promotes the recommendations of the peacebuilding reviews to stave off full-blown crises through early support to countries struggling with difficult political junctures. Allocations in 2015 to Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Niger all aim to support Governments to effectively respond to citizens' demands before frustration or mistrust escalate into violence.

13. Notwithstanding those achievements, 2015 was a challenging year for sustaining peace. Escalation of violence led to the formal suspension of Fund-supported activities in Yemen by April 2015, while continued fighting hampered programming in Burundi, Mali and South Sudan. In such environments, the Fund is mandated to take risks wherever possible. In Mali, after renewed fighting had impacted programming in early 2015, the Fund authorized a shift in the geographical focus of peace dividends projects until a more lasting peace could be secured in the north. In Yemen, despite suspension of most Fund-supported programming, a network of human rights monitors working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNDP continued throughout 2015 to risk their lives to report on human rights violations that otherwise would have remained undocumented. While the Fund is mandated to take such risks and will continue to seek opportunities to bolster human rights and peace-related work in the midst of crises, its engagement is predicated on national leadership and political will. Where those essential components are absent, the Fund will exercise its fiduciary responsibility and suspend programming until national commitment to peace is again evident.

14. In Ebola-affected countries, the health emergency that began in 2014 revealed how quickly nascent peacebuilding gains could be set back, even in disasters unrelated to conflict. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Fund authorized reprogramming of a number of initiatives to ensure that emerging human rights and security needs would not go unmet. In Guinea's historically volatile forestière

region, where the first case of Ebola was recorded, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP mobilized to provide key messaging to a distrustful community, which helped the region to be the first in Guinea to be declared Ebola-free. At the height of the crisis in Liberia, the Fund-supported alternative land dispute mechanism provided a network through which trusted messaging about the health response was delivered to local communities. The mechanism's ability to tap into citizens' trust stemmed from its earlier record on dispute resolution — from 17 land dispute cases resolved in 2013 to more than 200 in 2015, with over 75 per cent of decisions taken in 2014 still in force one year later.

15. The outlook for 2016 appears more hopeful than the outlook has been in recent years, with agreements in place to end a number of protracted conflicts that have uprooted unprecedented numbers of civilians and caused unimaginable suffering. Political settlements in Libya, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the anticipated agreement to end Colombia's 50-year conflict, however, do not represent the end, but rather the beginning, of the relevant peace processes. Re-establishing accountable and responsive State institutions, addressing long-standing grievances and human rights violations and supporting Governments to deliver on the promise of peace will require significant human and financial resources inputs. Those demands will arrive as financial support to the Peacebuilding Fund is at a historic low and will threaten the Fund's ability to meet increased demand to help States emerging from long-standing conflicts to sustain a fragile peace.

16. Throughout 2015, the Peacebuilding Fund raised the alarm that, without predictable financing, it could not sustain current levels of support, let alone meet new demands. The Fund allocated $77.9 million to 14 countries in 2015. By contrast, it received $53.5 million in donor contributions, recording its third-weakest year since initial pledges in 2006, despite the positive assessment of the Fund and calls for its strengthening by the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. While these independent reviews uniformly recognize the singular role the Fund plays in ensuring strategic coherence and funding politically risky, but necessary, endeavours that no other donor is able to support, such recognition will need to translate into predictable and sustainable financing soon, if the Fund is to remain a reliable partner to States and societies committed to sustaining peace.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund active portfolio, including allocations in 2015
(Millions of United States dollars)

			2015 allocations		
	Date of approval of priority plan	*Cumulative to date*	*Immediate Response Facility*	*Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility*	*Total*
Peacebuilding Commission countries					
Burundi	February 2008, May 2011, February 2014	61.74	–	–	–
Central African Republic	June 2008, February 2010	55.90	8.15	–	8.15
Guinea	April 2009, December 2011, December 2013 (multiple)	60.57	3.27	–	3.27
Guinea-Bissau	June 2008, January 2011, October 2015	26.16	0.45	10.00	10.45
Liberia	February 2008, May 2011, October 2013	51.87	–	–	–
Sierra Leone	October 2008, December 2010	52.16	–	–	–
Subtotal		**308.40**	**11.87**	**10.00**	**21.87**
Countries not on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission					
Bosnia and Herzegovina		2.00	–	–	–
Colombia		2.00	–	–	–
Comoros	December 2008, May 2013	12.33	0.43	–	0.43
Côte d'Ivoire	July 2008, April 2014	32.73	–	–	–
Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2009, June 2015	40.00	–	12.00	12.00
Guatemala	November 2010	11.00	–	–	–
Kyrgyzstan	September 2013	28.11	3.02	–	3.02
Libya		2.43	0.14	–	0.14
Madagascar	November 2015	12.01	0.51	11.50	12.01
Mali		10.93	–	–	–
Myanmar		7.72	4.09	–	4.09
Nepal	July 2008, May 2012	20.48	–	–	–
Niger		13.00	0.61	9.39	10.00
Papua New Guinea	October 2014	9.09	1.44	–	1.44
Philippines		3.00	–	–	–
Somalia		14.13	10.13	–	10.13
South Sudan	February 2013	16.52	–	–	–
Sri Lanka		4.20	1.20	–	1.20
Tajikistan[a]		1.60	1.60	–	1.60
Yemen	March 2014	20.70	–	–	–
Design, monitoring and evaluation		2.29	–	–	–
Subtotal		**266.27**	**23.17**	**32.89**	**56.06**
Total[b]		**574.67**	**35.04**	**42.89**	**77.93**

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2016.

[a] Counterpart to the cross-border project with Kyrgyzstan; inclusion does not indicate eligibility of Tajikistan to access the Peacebuilding Fund.

[b] Includes countries with an active Peacebuilding Fund portfolio in 2015.

III. Country-specific engagements of the Fund

A. Countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission

Burundi: supporting mediation and human rights during the crisis

17. The year 2015 was marked by political crisis and election-related violence, sparked by the incumbent President's run for a third term, a move deeply contested as unconstitutional by the opposition. Since April 2015, democratic space has shrunk, while insecurity and human rights violations have intensified, including the closing of independent media, restrictions on non-governmental organizations, violence between security forces and protesters and the flight of 230,000 refugees. Despite calls for an internationally mediated dialogue between the Government and opposition, there has been little progress.

18. A number of the Fund's projects have been repositioned to respond to the crisis, including the national dialogue project implemented by UNDP, which has been supporting meetings among provincial-level political party officials. A network of over 500 women mediators, implemented through the United Nations Entity for Gender and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), handled approximately 5,148 conflicts and initiated inclusive dialogue processes at the provincial level, which involved local authorities, opposition political parties, security services, and religious and civil society organizations, to address peace and security concerns. The Fund's support also enabled OHCHR to remain operational following the closing of the United Nations Office in Burundi and to undertake vital human rights monitoring and reporting. OHCHR advocacy contributed to the release of a number of people who had been arbitrarily arrested and to gaining Government commitment to prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations.

Central African Republic: promoting dialogue

19. Despite the challenging context, the country witnessed key milestones in 2015, including landmark elections in December and the conduct of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in May. The Forum, which was supported by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations country team, brought together over 700 representatives from across the country, including 120 women. The Fund provided critical support to the Forum, including a project to conduct local consultations throughout the country to bolster the participation of community representatives, which was implemented by UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund under the leadership of MINUSCA. The project yielded strong engagement by women and led to the setting out of provisions on the protection of women against conflict-related violence in all strategic documents that emerged from the Forum. The Forum also produced agreement on the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Central African Republic, according to which all actors committed to pursuing five priorities to sustain peace. Nine armed groups also signed an agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation as an annex to the Republican Pact. Agreement was also reached at the Forum to withdraw all children from armed groups.

20. To assist the restoration of State authority outside the capital, the Fund approved a $3-million project in November, implemented by UNDP and ILO with

MINUSCA support, to increase the civil administration's presence and the capacity of national authorities to deliver security and basic services and boost socioeconomic revitalization. The Fund also approved a $3.5-million project, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in close cooperation with MINUSCA, to reduce community violence by providing livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities and ex-combatants ineligible for formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support. In alignment with broader United Nations support to the legislative and presidential elections, the Fund also approved a $1-million project, implemented by UNDP, to back the deployment of civilian personnel to inform and orient voters.

Guinea: supporting a conducive environment for presidential elections

21. Presidential elections were held in Guinea on 11 October 2015 amid tensions sparked by disagreements over the national electoral framework and violence connected to Ebola-related tension. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the Fund's rapid response was critical to enabling peaceful and democratic elections. The Fund partnered with the United States Agency for International Development and the National Democratic Institute on a programme aimed at deploying 14,593 political party delegates to most of the country's 14,808 polling stations. Support was also extended to improving the capacity of the security forces with respect to crowd management, promoting non-violent communications by the media, and monitoring human rights. The Fund supported women and youth situation centres with decentralized offices ("satellites") in seven conflict-prone regions, in addition to Conakry, to ensure the active participation of women and youth in the electoral process and to prevent electoral violence. Through an early warning mechanism with direct links to traditional, community and religious leaders, as well as local and national authorities, the situation centres contributed to preventing and mitigating violence before, during and after the polls. The Fund also provided additional support for the Provisional Commission for Reconciliation, which was co-chaired by the country's top religious leaders, to conduct national consultations across all regions of Guinea to inform a national reconciliation process.

22. Finally, the Fund partnered with the World Bank to scale up an important employment project totalling $25 million. Through Fund support, 2,400 youth — 30 per cent of whom were women — joined 34,000 workers targeted by project. The project has been credited with reducing youth violence in the country's hotspots.

Guinea-Bissau: accompanying governmental reforms

23. Although 2015 began on a positive note, with the new Government advancing reforms and the donor round-table meeting, held in Brussels in March, garnering pledges of nearly $2 billion, a new political crisis emerged by midyear, prompting the President to dismiss the Prime Minister and his Government in August. A new Government was appointed only in November and has since struggled to obtain parliamentary approval for its programme.

24. Prior to the deterioration in the political environment, in June, the Fund approved a new $10-million peacebuilding priority plan aligned with the Peacebuilding Commission's statement of mutual commitments and following a joint strategic assessment mission led by the Department of Political Affairs. The

four main priorities of the plan — security sector reform, national dialogue and reconciliation, the fight against impunity, and youth and women's employment — were presented at the Brussels round-table meeting and catalysed support from other donors.

25. Since the crisis, the Fund has fast-tracked support to the good offices of my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau through activities aimed at political dialogue and, more specifically, inter- and intra-party dialogue, initiatives that are mutually reinforcing with the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Liberia: anticipating mission transition

26. Having begun to emerge from the Ebola crisis by the second quarter of 2015, Liberia relaunched key political processes, such as the constitutional review, decentralization and the implementation of the national reconciliation road map by midyear. In that context, through a $2-million project, implemented by UNDP, the Fund supported a participatory national constitutional conference in late March that brought together over 750 delegates from across Liberia.

27. Tapping into traditional justice and accountability mechanisms, the Fund-supported National Palava Hut programme launched four ethnographic forums in 2015 on mechanisms for justice and reconciliation, which are expected to provide the basis for increased social cohesion and understanding among Liberia's four linguistic groups. Moving forward, the traditional mechanisms will extend beyond reconciliation and begin to address accountability for conflict-related violations.

28. As the peacekeeping mission moves to drawdown in 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund will be guided by an updated statement of mutual commitments with the Peacebuilding Commission, which will inform future funding priorities during the transition.

Sierra Leone: supporting the security sector throughout the Ebola crisis

29. In response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the Fund reprogrammed its regular programme, which had been aligned with the Government's Agenda for Prosperity 2013-2018 and transition from the Integrated Peacebuilding Office to a United Nations country team presence. Following the reprogramming, independent monitors reported no serious abuses at checkpoints and a reduced number of conflicts following human rights training to security personnel manning border and Ebola checkpoints. Legal aid to prisoners yielded the release of 163 prisoners and a reduction in the use of pretrial detention, critical factors in eliminating the risk of Ebola in participating prisons. To encourage progress with security sector reforms, the President launched the Fund-supported Independent Police Complaints Board in October 2015. Finally, mediation efforts by youth and mediation/dialogue facilitators trained through a Fund-supported UNDP project helped to prevent 40 Ebola-related conflicts in 10 border communities from escalating into violent conflict.

30. Looking ahead, the Peacebuilding Commission will review its efforts to accompany Sierra Leone in its transition. Against this backdrop, the Fund, together with the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP, will co-fund a peace and development ad iser to ensure that current and future country programming sustains peace in the post-Ebola environment.

B. Other recipient countries

Bosnia and Herzegovina: promoting dialogue

31. The Fund's investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed to reinvigorate dialogue and promote tolerance in an otherwise stalled environment. To date, the project has reached an estimated 29 per cent of the population through two high-level dialogue platforms, 26 youth forums and training sessions, 40 grass-roots projects and a mass media campaign. Many project components targeted youth, who are particularly marginalized, but who also hold the best hope for sustaining peace in the future. Citizens' interest in participating in funded activities surpassed expectations, and the overall impact of these efforts on citizens' perceptions will be determined though an evaluation in 2016.

Colombia: encouraging individual action to promote peace

32. The "Respira Paz" campaign, jointly funded by Norway and the Peacebuilding Fund, concluded in 2015 amid peace negotiations aimed at ending Colombia's 50-year conflict. The campaign promoted greater awareness of the negative effects of the conflict on all aspects of society and encouraged individual responsibility for promoting peace. The project was implemented by UNICEF and UNDP through a multifaceted approach that included mobile cinema, radio serial dramas and peace-related activities in 153 conflict-affected municipalities. There have been early indications that the project has contributed to more favourable public attitudes towards peace, outcomes that will be validated through an independent evaluation in 2016.

Comoros: confidence-building through a common vision

33. The Fund has been promoting inter-Comorian peace since 2008, through two phases of support aimed at security sector reform, better governance, increased social cohesion and revitalization of the economy. As 2016 presidential elections loom close, Comoros still faces a number of challenges on the political, social and economic fronts.

34. Lack of anticipated financing by donors and capacity gaps have hampered achievement of results of the Fund's programmatic investments, though some important progress was made. Through Fund support, representatives of all security forces and civilians from the three islands agreed to five strategic objectives in the country's first-ever common security sector vision. Fund support also established a network of 850 women mediators and 350 youth leaders, who are working to resolve community disputes and strengthen social cohesion. With further financial support from the Fund, the networks will help create a community-based early warning and violence prevention system during the upcoming electoral period.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: creatively leveraging donor support

35. The political and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained fragile throughout 2015, with tensions running high ahead of upcoming national elections. The fraught context has contributed to mixed outcomes for sustaining peace across the country. Despite these challenges, the Fund has pushed innovative financing that so far has mobilized $12 million from other donors and launched the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund.

36. Following the revision of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, the Government approved provincial stabilization strategies and plans for three eastern provinces. The plans put political dialogue at their centre and favour a holistic area-based approach. Two Fund-supported pilot projects thus far have launched a range of initiatives, including a series of dialogues, in which citizens have discussed conflict dynamics and community priorities in the Mambasa and Kalehe areas, the start of income-generating activities for over 2,000 vulnerable people, the certification of eight mining sites, the support provided to conflict mediation and the rehabilitation of police stations and training of security personnel.

Côte d'Ivoire: supporting peaceful elections

37. In anticipation of elections in October 2015, the Fund approved its second priority plan in Côte d'Ivoire, totalling $12 million. Activities under the plan have provided crucial support to the good offices of my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire to foster dialogue and reduce tensions among political parties, including through dialogue platforms that involved women and youth in the lead-up to the elections. Moreover, the Fund supported the establishment of the country's first-ever women and youth situation centre, similar to the centre in Guinea, which played an important role in preventing violence throughout the electoral period. Overall, election-related violence decreased, and results indicated that 21 per cent more women had participated as electors than in 2010. Finally, training of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces on crowd management contributed to containing outbreaks of violence before, during and after the elections.

38. Beyond elections, the priority plan aims at consolidating peacebuilding gains begun under the Fund's earlier investment by reinforcing State capacity to deliver services and foster social cohesion, economic empowerment and intra-community dialogue. In continuation of the work of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the priority plan supported both the National Programme for Social Cohesion and the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims to ensure that all victims are identified and the reparation programme is inclusive and comprehensive.

Guatemala: historic steps against impunity

39. Since April 2015, headlines in Guatemala have been dominated by the anti-corruption investigation pursued by the public prosecutor in cooperation with the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. The investigation led to the unprecedented arrest of senior government officials, including the former President. The resulting political crisis has awakened a social movement demanding structural reforms that have been pending since the 1996 Peace Accords. In this context, the Fund's peacebuilding priority plan, which aimed to strengthen the rule of law and fight impunity, thereby complementing the efforts of the International Commission, came to an end in December 2015.

40. While an independent evaluation is under way, there have been early indications that the Fund's investment significantly contributed to institutional capacity in key areas. Fund-supported efforts against impunity contributed to a historic drop in the impunity rate from 98 per cent in 2008 to 89 per cent in 2015. In addition, data from a Fund-supported information technology platform illustrate

improvements in policing: real-time receipt of police records dropped from more than 4 hours in 2013 to 20 minutes by late 2015.

41. With support from the Fund's Gender Promotion Initiative, the Guatemala Women's Forum — the largest and most diverse network in the country — was reactivated, and an agreement with the National Peace Accords Council was signed to strengthen women's role in monitoring future compliance with the Peace Accords.

Kyrgyzstan: piloting the Fund's first-ever cross-border project to reduce regional tensions

42. Kyrgyzstan celebrated reasonably calm and open parliamentary elections in October, passing a significant milestone since election-related violence brought the country to a crisis situation in 2010. In support of Kyrgyzstan's commitment to addressing the underlying tensions of 2010, projects implemented under the peacebuilding priority plan began gaining traction in 2015, including, more specifically, policy reforms aimed at increasing respect for human rights at the central level mirrored by improvements in the capacity of local self-government actors to promote social cohesion and induce citizens' trust.

43. Tensions over scarce resources at the local level, however, continued to plague communities along the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border. The Fund will support confidence-building measures among border communities through its first-ever cross-border initiative, which was approved in early December. The $3-million project brings together the United Nations, local leaders, civil society and the two national Governments to initiate dialogue between distrustful communities and seek joint solutions to common problems, such as access to water and pasture land.

Madagascar: identifying peacebuilding priorities through broad consultation

44. Madagascar was declared eligible to receive support from the Peacebuilding Fund in January 2015, based on a commitment from the Government to address challenges underpinning the political crises that have recurred since independence in 1960. In December 2015, the Fund approved a peacebuilding priority plan of $11.5 million to increase trust between citizens and State institutions and extend basic services to Madagascar's long-neglected southern region. The plan was developed through a series of workshops that brought together stakeholders from Government, the United Nations country team, civil society and donors for a constructive debate on peacebuilding gaps, challenges and priorities. Fund support will focus on three main areas: strengthening the rule of law and good governance, with particular attention on reducing corruption; contributing to security sector reform; and providing holistic support for the stabilization of southern Madagascar.

Mali: jumpstarting peacebuilding in post-agreement Mali

45. Amid persistent tensions and fighting in the north, a new chance for peace emerged in mid-2015, with the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process. Building on the momentum sparked by the agreement, the Fund contributed crucial funding support to high-risk interventions in the north of the country, where other partners were unable, or hesitant, to intervene.

46. Prior to June, a Fund-backed cantonment project provided catalytic incentive for combatants to sign the peace agreement. After some delay, the project was extended to support cantonment in three sites in the Gao and Timbuktu areas through the mobilization of additional resources from the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and from Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

47. An earlier Fund allocation of $11 million, which reinforced coherence and integration between the Mission and the United Nations country team, aimed at delivering peace dividends through access to basic services and employment opportunities in the conflict-affected regions of Gao and Timbuktu. Despite a slow start, significant progress was made in 2015: approximately 4,500 children, including 1,717 girls, returned to school, and about 100 youth and women benefited from income-generation activities. A joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-IOM project provided 16 boreholes to 16,500 people, which reduced competition over access to scare water resources. An innovative community-based monitoring mechanism, begun in late 2015, will provide evidence of whether the progress translates into sustainable peacebuilding gains.

Myanmar: addressing communal tensions and preventing the recruitment of child soldiers

48. Myanmar achieved a number of milestones in 2015, including the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October and the conduct of historic elections in November. On the basis of those promising developments, the Fund approved a $1.5-million project to end child recruitment into the armed forces and groups, as the extension of an earlier project. The Fund also allocated $2.5 million to help establish the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, which aims to alleviate intercommunal tensions, especially in Rakhine, through the promotion of inter-faith dialogue, social research and early warning mechanisms.

Nepal: continued support to sustain political transition

49. Nepal's peace process was tested in 2015 year by political unrest over the new Constitution and the catastrophic earthquakes in April and May that affected 5.4 million people and killed 8,900 inhabitants. In the lead-up to the new Constitution, Fund investments provided for several key policy and legislative initiatives intended to address lingering drivers of conflict and inform the Constitution drafting process. More specifically, a $1.2-million project by IOM, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and UNDP encouraged inter-party dialogue and consensus-building on contentious land issues. A $2.2-million project implemented by UNDP and UN-Women contributed to the formation of an umbrella organization of conflict victims now taking the lead in representing victims' issues vis-à-vis the Government, while a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization initiative contributed to progressing freedom of speech protections for journalists and civil society.

Niger: supporting youth and women in conflict-prone areas

50. The Niger faced increasing humanitarian and security challenges in 2015, exacerbated by instability and the spread of violence across West Africa and the Sahel. The Niger stepped up security measures in response to those pressures, declared a state of emergency in the Diffa region and participated in the Multinational Joint Task Force. The security response, however, limited the Government's ability to invest in socioeconomic development and address youth unemployment. Concerns remained that economic marginalization and feelings of exclusion among the Niger's youth (67 per cent of the population) risked increasing the appeal of violent extremism and politically motivated violence in the current electoral context.

51. To support government efforts to stem the spread of violence across the country the Fund allocated $10 million in August 2015 towards a peacebuilding priority plan, which focused mainly on delivering peace dividends to marginalized populations. Developed in a participatory fashion, the plan covers four areas: socioeconomic opportunities for vulnerable youth; support to national dialogue; conflict prevention around natural resources; and reinforcement of security in the border regions. Projects implemented in collaboration with UNOWA, including support for a conducive environment for upcoming elections, are expected to start in early 2016.

52. The plan follows an earlier $3-million project aimed at youth that was completed in 2015. An independent evaluation found that the project led to the employment of 1,554 youth and women and the establishment of 800 small businesses. These positive individual outcomes have also led to a reduction of violence and illicit activities in targeted municipalities.

Papua New Guinea: advancing agreement and improving dialogue

53. Parliamentary and presidential elections, successfully and peacefully held in May in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, saw the re-election of the President and the historic election of a woman candidate in an open seat, a first in Bougainville history. Strengthening relations and dialogue between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the new Bougainville Government will continue to be important as they work to find common ground on a number of key issues, such as financial arrangements between the two Governments, undertaking a second joint review of Bougainville's autonomy arrangements, in 2016, and the preparations for the future referendum on the status of Bougainville.

54. Backing more frequent and open dialogue between the two Governments, a $2.5-million project implemented by UNDP helped to forge agreement between three fourths of dissenting armed factions and the Government of Bougainville. The project also supported the Bougainville Parliament, and the bipartisan Referendum Committee held its first-ever meeting. At the local level, Fund-supported projects launched a series of community conversations in south Bougainville to address trauma and provide referral for much-needed counselling services, as well as in central Bougainville to strengthen youth leadership and civic engagement to promote social cohesion.

Philippines: troubled implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

55. In January 2015, clashes between the national police, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in central Mindanao led to a temporary suspension of congressional hearings on the Bangsamoro Basic Law. The clashes occurred just as a Fund-supported project, which was designed to promote broad acceptance of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro through political engagement at the national and regional levels and to provide peace dividends to at-risk areas, was getting under way. Throughout 2015, the project aimed at facilitating political dialogue and advocacy on the Basic Law and launching initiatives intended to secure the constitutionality and legality of the peace agreement. Despite those efforts, passage of the Basic Law by the Congress and Senate has continued to be delayed owing to lack of a quorum and the weakening of political and public support for the Law.

Somalia: promoting donor cohesion and national leadership

56. Under the leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), and in partnership with the Department of Political Affairs, the Fund continued to support priorities outlined in the New Deal Compact through a $12-million package of projects approved in 2015. In response to the President's request to support the Federal Government's stabilization strategy in newly recovered territories, the Fund allocated $4.2 million to the Mission and UNDP to support the extension of State authority in newly recovered areas in the South Central region. Through that work, caretaker administrations have been established in five centres, with 15 more planned by the end of 2016. An additional $7.8 million approved later in 2015 supports Compact priorities that were jointly endorsed by the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility Steering Committee, which identified the following priorities: stabilization in newly recovered areas; rule of law, justice and corrections; State formation and reconciliation dialogues; risk management for the Facility; and a pilot effort to rehabilitate, and eventually release, Al-Shabaab inmates in Baidoa prison.

57. In 2016, the Fund will partner with the World Bank to go beyond coordination of efforts through pooled funding mechanisms to channel funds directly through Government financial systems.

South Sudan: promoting system-wide cohesion through re-engagement

58. While Fund investments have been largely on hold since South Sudan relapsed into conflict in late 2013, the Peacebuilding Support Office authorized the extension of its peacebuilding priority plan until the end of 2016 in order to provide the opportunity for existing projects to achieve results. This move comes after the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in August 2015, which signalled greater potential for effective engagement. Since then, the Fund has been working with the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations country team to provide early support for the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement through a coordinated, cohesive approach.

Sri Lanka: reconciliation through sustainable return and accountability for the past

59. The Secretary-General declared Sri Lanka eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund in November 2015. Fund support will align with nationally identified priorities, including national unity and reconciliation, and Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. The Fund will back the efforts of my Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence to assist Sri Lanka to address outstanding legacies of past violations through an inclusive national consultation process. Starting early in 2016, the Fund will underwrite a peacebuilding context assessment to inform the development of a peacebuilding priority plan.

60. Prior to the declaration of eligibility, the Office of the Resident Coordinator, the country team, the Department of Political Affairs and the Fund adopted a concept note to support the new Government's 100-day programme. Based on the concept note, the Fund allocated $1.2 million to UNHCR and UNICEF to assist Government-led resettlement of displaced persons — a long-standing core grievance since the end of the conflict in 2009. Two more projects: one to support national consultations and the strategy to design credible and effective transitional justice mechanisms, led by OHCHR; the other to support capacity-building for reconciliation mechanisms, led by UNDP, will be launched in early 2016.

Yemen: support for mediation and human rights monitoring amidst deteriorating conditions

61. The outbreak of full-scale war in late March 2015 prompted the Fund to suspend most of its investments in Yemen by April. The Fund authorized continued implementation, however, of projects related to human rights monitoring, the development of modules for conflict-sensitive programming and limited capacity-building of local non-governmental organizations on conflict-sensitive programming. The Fund also authorized the continuation of support for the mediation efforts of my Special Envoy for Yemen, which has enabled the United Nations-led negotiation team to provide technical support and mediation to inform a pathway back to a political process. Looking forward to 2016, the Fund will continue to support mediation efforts in the hope of reaching a political solution to this devastating conflict.

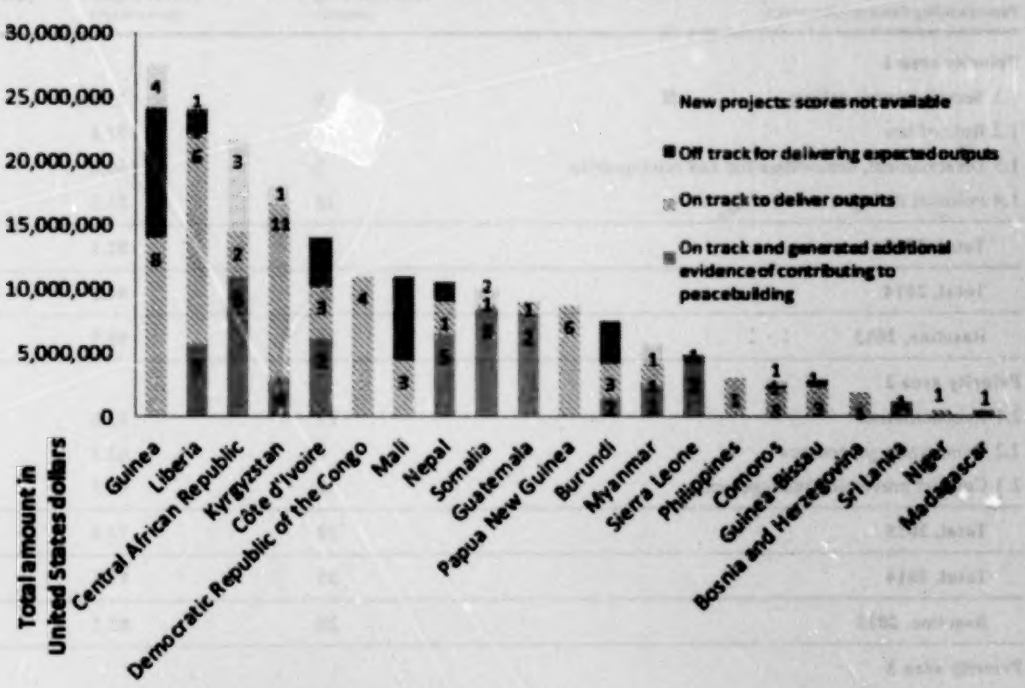
IV. Project performance in 2015

62. Performance assessment in 2015 was based on a review of all projects that were active for more than three months — 109 projects[1] — representing an increase of 30 per cent over 2014. Scores were obtained through a consultative process, which included periodic reports of project implementers, reports of the Joint Steering Committee, evaluation and mission reports, as well as information from Fund staff and United Nations partners. Projects deemed off track to deliver expected outputs received a score of "1", those that were on track to deliver outputs were rated "2", and

[1] The review excluded projects in Libya, South Sudan and Yemen owing to rampant insecurity in those countries.

those that were on track and generated additional evidence of contributing to peacebuilding outcomes — a much higher bar — received a score of "3".

Figure I
Peacebuilding Fund project performance, by country and amount in USD



Note: Numbers in the graph refer to the number of projects.
Source: Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations, December 2015.

63. At the end of 2015, 81.7 per cent of projects in the Fund's portfolio were on track to deliver expected outputs, which is slightly higher than the 78.6 per cent in 2014. This is a remarkable achievement, given that the midyear review of the Fund's portfolio indicated weaker results, with only 71.6 per cent of projects on track as a result of the continued impact of Ebola in West Africa and renewed political and security crises in several of the Fund's active recipient countries. The turnaround can be attributed, in part, to enhanced monitoring and proactive engagement by Fund staff, which allowed for reprogramming of Fund-supported initiatives to adapt to changing contexts. Looking ahead to 2016, the Fund will formalize those enhanced monitoring procedures to more systematically support "off track" projects to get them back on track.

Table 2
Trend analysis of the Peacebuilding Fund's global performance, 2013-2015

Peacebuilding Fund priority areas	*Total number of projects*	*On track to deliver agreed project outputs (percentage)*	*On track with supplemental evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)*
Priority area 1			
1.1 Security sector reform	9	55.6	0.0
1.2 Rule of law	16	93.8	31.3
1.3 Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration	2	100.0	50.0
1.4 Political dialogue	12	83.3	25.0
Total, 2015	**39**	**82.1**	**23.1**
Total, 2014	**25**	**84.1**	**18.7**
Baseline, 2013	**21**	**85.7**	**38.1**
Priority area 2			
2.1 Reconciliation	23	82.6	39.1
2.2 Democratic governance	8	62.5	12.5
2.3 Conflict prevention/management	8	62.5	25.0
Total, 2015	**39**	**74.4**	**30.8**
Total, 2014	**39**	**77.5**	**38.7**
Baseline, 2013	**28**	**82.1**	**32.1**
Priority area 3			
3.1 Employment	4	100.0	0.0
3.2 Equitable access to social services	5	80.0	0.0
Total, 2015	**9**	**88.9**	**0.0**
Total, 2014	**11**	**64.7**	**0.0**
Baseline, 2013	**10**	**70.0**	**40.0**
Priority area 4			
4.1 State capacities	6	100.0	50.0
4.2 Extension of State authority	3	100.0	33.3
4.3 Governance of peacebuilding resources	13	84.6	30.8
Total, 2015	**22**	**90.9**	**36.4**
Total, 2014	**9**	**89.9**	**18.1**
Baseline, 2013	**9**	**66.6**	**33.3**
Overall total, 2015	**109**	**81.7**	**26.6**

Source: Scores based on Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations, December 2015.

64. Projects providing peace dividends through employment and support to key service delivery in marginalized or conflict-affected areas showed improvement over past years. Demonstrating clear evidence of peacebuilding outcomes in this area, however, remains a challenge. To better understand the link with peacebuilding, the Peacebuilding Support Office, together with the World Bank, UNDP and ILO, launched a review in 2015 to provide evidence-based guidance for improved programming in this area. The review will be moved forward through the implementation and rigorous evaluation of projects based on its recommendations, with a view to achieving better programming so that peace dividends can realize their potential in offering hope to populations affected by crises.

65. As outlined in its terms of reference, the Fund's investments are intended to leverage other financial support and unblock political processes. In 2015, 54 per cent of the Fund's projects were catalytic in at least one of those directions, with just over 18 per cent of projects producing both. In northern Mali, for example, the Fund's steadfast commitment to a cantonment project in the face of significant challenges enabled the early implementation of critical provisions of the new peace agreement and provided incentive for bilateral donors to commit additional funds.

66. The Fund pays particular attention to environments and projects that are considered as innovative or high risk. Such projects typically take advantage of political windows of opportunity and aim to make an early difference before other sources of funding become available. According to the Fund's risk marker, in 2015, nearly 70 per cent of projects in the Fund's portfolio were either medium or high risk, with 22 per cent in the higher category. Among projects in the highest-risk category are innovative initiatives in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mali and Somalia.

V. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

67. On 2 February 2015, I appointed 10 members to the fourth Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group, following the end of the extended term of the third Advisory Group on 31 October 2014. At its first meeting in April 2015, the Group exchanged views with the Chair of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015, reviewed the Fund's work in Guinea-Bissau and peacebuilding financing, and, with UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, discussed the extension of State authority in Fund-recipient countries.

68. The Group's second meeting, hosted by the World Bank's fragility, conflict and violence network, was held in Washington, D.C., in October 2015, with the aim of strengthening cooperation between the Bank and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Group discussed recommendations from the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture, opportunities for collaboration with the Bank on analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation, in general, and on Bank-Fund collaboration in the Central African Republic, in particular.

69. The Advisory Group also expressed concern over the Fund's projected income, which is expected to fall well short of its $100-million target, and underscored the need for predictable funding at levels that match increasing demands.

B. Budget and personnel

70. The budget for managing the Peacebuilding Fund is derived from 3 per cent of donor contributions. The 2015 cost plan was $2,838,297, approximately 1.4 per cent lower than in 2014, most of which was allocated to direct staff costs (58 per cent) covering 12 permanent and temporary posts, including nine Fund staff, rent (9 per cent) and travel of Fund staff and the Advisory Group (8 per cent). Contributions in 2014 amounted to $78.3 million and yielded $2.4 million in income for 2015. To maximize its income, most travel was undertaken voluntarily in economy class, and the Fund benefitted from three Programme Associates financed by Japan and Switzerland and co-financed by Australia. Only 9 of the 12 posts were therefore fully financed from the Fund's overhead. Final expenses for 2015 are estimated to be $2.1 million.

71. The Fund's projected cost plan will fall to $2.5 million in 2016, a reduction directly tied to expected income levels. Despite funding limitations, the Fund will continue quality programming through its technical support project, leveraging partnerships with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Interpeace and the PeaceNexus Foundation, seeking secondments from United Nations organizations and seeking financial support for Programme Associates. In addition, the Office will redouble its resource mobilization efforts, capitalizing on the Fund's achievements and the positive assessment from the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

C. Peacebuilding Fund global workshop

72. The Fund and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes co-hosted their third global workshop in November 2015, which was generously funded again by the Government of Finland. The workshop brought 45 colleagues, including participants from United Nations agencies, fund secretariats, Governments and civil society, from 14 countries to Durban, South Africa, for five days of discussion and training on monitoring and reporting on peacebuilding programmes.

D. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

73. Acting on recommendations from the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture, in partnership with the PeaceNexus Foundation, the Fund's monitoring and evaluation team launched two initiatives in 2015 to build the capacity of country-based partners to design, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding programming. One set of guidance will enable the Fund to roll out community-based monitoring in 2016, thereby providing a voice to grass-roots stakeholders within the Fund's in-country governance mechanisms. The Fund also supported perception surveys in Kyrgyzstan and Mali, ensuring that citizens' trust, tolerance and other dispositions central to advancing peace are measured on an ongoing basis.

74. The new evaluation strategy that the Fund began implementing in 2015 promotes frequent opportunities for analysis and adjustment to facilitate improved adaptation to dynamic peacebuilding contexts. The Fund's monitoring and evaluation team acquired two new specialists in 2015, one to support country

partners during the design and implementation of Fund-financed work and one dedicated exclusively to managing independent evaluations commissioned by the Fund. This division of labour ensures that country partners receive the guidance they need during the design and implementation of peacebuilding initiatives, while maintaining the critical distance necessary for evaluation.

75. The Fund continued to offer guidance during programme development through support missions to the Central African Republic, Liberia, Somalia and Sri Lanka and through extended missions to Guinea. Augmenting that support, the monitoring and evaluation team managed evaluations in Colombia, Guatemala and Liberia and assisted in the evaluation of Fund-supported activity in Nepal and the Niger.

VI. Conclusion

76. The Fund heads into 2016 facing a paradox. While independent reviews recognize the Fund's unique position to support critical but risky initiatives and promote coherence on the ground, decreased donor commitments will force difficult investment choices to be made in the coming year. Barring any significant change in the mobilization of donor resources, low income in 2015 will limit the Fund's available programming amount to roughly $60 million in 2016, prompting lower allocations to fewer countries.

77. Responding to this challenge, the Fund will initiate new management procedures in 2016 to ensure that available resources are used to maximum advantage and will invest in a communications strategy to provide decision-makers with the information necessary to make the case for sufficient levels of predictable funding.

78. The 2015 reviews explicitly recognize that global needs for sustaining peace are expanding, not contracting. Their conclusions will inform a repositioning of the Peacebuilding Fund in 2016. The Fund will begin 2016 by taking stock of global peacebuilding needs to clearly illustrate the magnitude of demand and how distant current levels of support are from matching global needs.